

The Lord our Father in the Heavens.

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE

NEW JERUSALEM TEMPLE

I N

RED CROSS-STREET, NEAR CRIPPLEGATE,

L O N D O N,

July 20, 1794=38,

ON THE

PREFATORY ADDRESS

I N T H E

L O R D's P R A Y E R,

"Our Father in the Heavens."

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SERMON I.

Matt. vi. 9.

Πατερ ημων ο εν τοις ουρανοις.

“ Our Father in the Heavens.”

THE two grand ends of all worship are the humiliation of the creature, and the exaltation of the Creator; for in no other state of mind can the Lord flow into the soul with his own divine proceeding to unite the man to himself by love and faith. The most ardent wish of divine love is to give all his own to the creature; but in this (if the expression may be used) God himself cannot be gratified, except with the man prepared to receive him by being emptied of self-will, and self-pride; for as the creature is emptied of these, yea the more debased he sinks himself in his own eyes, the more he exalts the Lord in his affections and thoughts; and as he exalts the Lord, how-

ever he may depress himself to hell, the Lord elevates proportionably to heaven.

As a pious means of introducing the soul into this state, divested of self-will and self-pride, was private and public prayer instituted by command of heaven; implying in it's very name, that we are dependent creatures upon the bounty of him whose mercy we crave. And lest mankind should be deficient to ask in the fulness of mercies, what a God has to bestow, in consequence of their short-sightedness into the boundless compassions of the merciful Father of all; or should ask amiss by reason of seeing things by their own false lights; he has not only deigned to give us the manner in which our very adoration of him ought to be framed, but also, being over and above bountiful, has given us a prayer even as to the expressions themselves, which includes in it every good or true desire that the human mind shall be capable of asking or conceiving. It is true, this fulness may not manifest itself to the man, who as yet has been no farther instructed, than into the appearances of truths, which are in the letter of this prayer; but it will appear in all it's relative fulness and divine glory, to the mind capable of looking within
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the veil, having entered into the spiritual sense as revealed now, together with the doctrine of correspondences, in this our Lord's second advent ; for the fulness of this prayer, in common with the rest of the word, is of such a nature, that it not only is accommodated to men upon earth, but likewise to every angel in heaven ; hence says the psalmist David, in allusion to the latter, in Psalm cxix. 89, "*For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.*"

This prefatory address, *Our Father in the heavens*, contains the whole of the first article of christian faith. It leads our minds to the God we ought to adore, and under what perceptions of mind we ought to come into his presence.

In opening of which, it will be proper, first of all, to explain, according to the doctrine of the sacred scriptures, the import of the term FATHER ; in an illuminated understanding of which lies the very essence of all our religion and worship. Each of the advents of our Lord was made in order to restore this knowledge amongst mankind, lost to the church and the world, in consequence of the night, which, at the time of their end, came over the Jewish and Christian dispensations ; a night wherein *darkness covered*

covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, to such a degree, that when the redeemer came naturally, as in his first advent, and spiritually in his second, declaring himself first to be the Son of God, and then from the opening of the internal sense of his holy word, manifesting, that in consequence of the union of the divine and human in his own person as Jehovah Jesus, he became the everlasting Father, the divine proceeding from whom, as Father and Son united, is the holy spirit; thus the one personal God, in whom is the complete trinity, answering to the finite trinity of soul, body, and spirit in man, than which there is not a more perfect image. I say, although he has thus come superabounding in love and light; to the mind willing to forsake all his own self-will, and the dazzle of his own intelligence; how few comparatively receive the welcome sound, and follow him as their Creator, their Saviour, the all they want in time and to eternity!

If we peruse the sacred history of the four Evangelists, we find our Lord often speaking of the Father, by which, with a little attention to what is said, and a view of the connection in which it is spoken, may be

be easily seen, that by the Father is not meant any person in the godhead separate from the Lord, as for want of due examination has hitherto been supposed in the church, before the Lord was pleased to light up the present candle in the establishment of the New Jerusalem dispensation, wherein it is now allowable to bring the rational faculties to the word, and to comprehend all the truths therein revealed, because they are so many mirrors reflecting the Lord's glory from himself to man, and as being revealed, are the proper objects of our contemplation.

In this glory now seen from the Lord in his word, it may now be known, that when the Father is spoken of, we are to understand a state of the divine, and more particularly the divine in HIMSELF, and thus his very self, as indeed plainly appears from many passages of the word, particularly in the New Testament, a few of which I will now lay before you, to corroborate the doctrine.

In the first instance, it may appear plain from his very conception, that being from the divine itself, which in the word is called the Father, whereupon, with propriety, in regard to his divine human, he is called the Son of God ; and
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He also said, that God was his Father. His divine conception is thus recorded in Matthew's Gospel, chap. i. 20, 25. *The angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream, saying, Joseph thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And Joseph knew her not, till she had brought forth her first-born son.* Luke, in his account of the same, chap. i. 31, 34, 35, says, *The angel said unto Mary, Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus; he shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest. Then Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, wherefore that holy that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.* This is the evangelical account of the conception of the divine human, from the essential divine, in the virgin's womb, whereby God manifested himself in flesh. The invisible Jehovah became visible in the person of Jesus Emanuel; from whence it is clear, that the Lord Jesus Christ, even from his very conception, was Jehovah God, and from conception

ception to be Jehovah God, is to have life in himself, as he himself declares ; that is, his very soul and life was what is called the Father, because life itself, from whence life flowed to the body, which is called the Son of God. It is here likewise plain, that the human of the Lord is called the Son of God ; for it is said, that the holy, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.

That the Lord by the Father understood the divine in himself, thus his own soul, may be also proved from John, chap. i. 1, 2, 14 : *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and God was the word ; all things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made ; and the word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* That the Lord, by the word here, is to be understood as to the divine human, is very evident ; for it is said, that the word was made flesh, and we saw his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father. That the Lord is God equally in regard to the human, is also evident ; for it says, that the word was with God, and God was the word, and the word was made
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flesh. In this same gospel, chap. v. beginning at the 17th verse, our Lord enforces the same doctrine, in a divine address to the faithless and hard-hearted Jews, who sought to slay him, because he cured the lame man on the sabbath day. *Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for whatsoever things he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise; for the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel: for as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.* V. 23. *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.* V. 25, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; for as the Father hath life in himself, even so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. That by*
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the Father here is meant the divine in the Lord, which was his life, as the soul of the father is in every man, and that by the Son is meant the human, which lived from his own divine in himself, and from thence also was made divine, consequently, that in Jehovah Jesus, the Father and the Son are one, as body and soul, may appear plain to the rational mind, from this passage of scripture, wherein it is declared, that the Son does such things as the Father ; that the Son raises the dead, and quickens, as the Father ; that the Son has life in himself, as the Father; and that they should live, who hear the voice of the Son.

This truth is further confirmed by our Lord, in this same gospel of John, chap. x. beginning at v. 27, where our Lord thus addresses the Pharisees, *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand ; I and the Father are one.* We are then told, that the Jews took up stones to stone him, because he made himself God ; upon which, v. 36, he says, *Say ye of him,*

B 2 *whom*

whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. Here the Lord, at first view, appears to speak of his Father, as of another distinct from himself; as in saying, No one can snatch the sheep out of my Father's hands; and if I do not the works of my Father, believe me not: but lest his thus expressing himself, should cause the nourishing of such a thought, he immediately adds, that they might not suppose, that he wished to draw their minds from the simple unity which subsisted between him and the Father, I and the Father are one; and lest they should still imagine, that they were only externally one, in respect to attributes or perfections, and not as the body and soul of one person, he adds, for ever to put the doubt out of the human heart, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

Hence it may appear clear to the rational mind, now capable of being opened from the light of the word, that the Lord, by the Father, means his own very self,

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or the divine in himself, by conception ; and that by the Son, whom the Father sent, he understood his own human ; for this was sent into the world, inasmuch as it was conceived of God the Father, and born of the virgin, which may also be further illustrated from this gospel of John, chap. xii. 44, 45, 46, *Jesus cried, and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me ; and he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me ; I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not walk in darkness.* That the Lord here understood himself by the Father, and his own divine human by the Son, is evident to a demonstration ; for he says, he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me ; as also, he that believeth on me, believeth not on me, (that is, not only on me) but on him that sent me ; and still afterwards asserts, *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness.*

It is also, because the Father and he are one, and the human of the Lord made divine, from the divine which was his life and soul, that the Evangelist tells us, in the xiii chapter of the same gospel, and 3 verse, *that Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into his hand, and that*
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he was come from God, and went to God ; by which is meant, that all things of the Father's were his ; to come from the Father, and to go to the Father, means to exist from him, and to be united to him, as the soul to the body. Hence he further says, in the 20th verse of this same chapter, He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. This truth is also apparent from the 14th of this same gospel of John, from the 6th to the 11th verses, Jesus saith, I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me ; if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also ; and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us ; Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father ; and how sayest thou then, shew us the Father ; believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works ; believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works sake. In this passage, our Lord manifests to every humble disciple, that the union subsisting between

tween himself and the Father, is the same as subsists between the soul and body of man ; yea, that it is of such a close nature, that whosoever seeth him, seeth the Father also ; and because the union is of such an intimate nature, that no one can approach the soul of man, but must approach the man himself, therefore he says in John, chap. xvi. 2, 3, and 10, as addressing the Father, concerning himself, *Thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him ; and this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent ;* AND ALL MINE ARE THINE, AND THINE ARE MINE, *and I am glorified in them ;* that is, all things of the Father's are his, the same as all things of a man's soul are of himself, for a man and his soul are one, as life and the subject of life.

It is upon this same principle, that the Lord says, that when he shall come to judgment, he shall come in the glory of his Father ; and also that he declares, at the close of Matthew's gospel, *All power is given into my hands, in heaven and in earth.*

That by the Son of God, in the word, is meant the divine human, which the
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Father assumed, will be manifest from Isaiah's prophecy, chap. ix. 6, *For a Boy was born to us, a Son was given to us, and he shall call his name Wonderful, Counsellor, God, Hero, FATHER OF ETERNITY, Prince of peace*; and may be fully corroborated from the same prophet, chap. vii. 14, *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a Son, and his name shall be called GOD WITH US*: where that the Lord, in regard to his divine human, is to be understood by the Boy born, and the Son given, is evident to a demonstration; and that the Lord, as to that divine human, is also God, and become one with the Father, is equally evident; for it says, that he shall be called GOD, GOD WITH US, and THE FATHER OF ETERNITY.

Thus, from the glory of the word, we may see what the term Father means, when applied to the Deity; and that when the Lord used the expression, he meant his own divine, which was the soul and life of the human, and not any other being or essence whatever, separate or out of himself; hence the fact is, as clearly expressed in the Athanasian creed, that the divine and human are not two in the Lord, but one, as body and soul; and because God and man in the Lord
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are not two, but one person, and thus united as body and soul ; it follows of consequence, that the divine, which was in the Lord from conception, was what he called the Father ; and that it was the human, which came forth from the essential divine, that he called the Son ; consequently, that in his divine person, the Father and Son are both concentrated, the one and only Lord God of angels and men.

We now come to the second thing necessary to speak to, in considering our text ; namely, what may be implied in addressing the Lord as our Father.

This, in the first instance, we may do on the consideration of his being our creator ; and when I say our creator, I mean the creator of all worlds, and every thing therein. In this respect, we may say with the prophet Malachi, chap. ii. 10, *Have we not all one Father, has not one God created us ?* To confirm this position, that this one Father, this one God, the *Our Father* in the text, as our creator, is Jehovah Jesus, we have to turn again to John's gospel, chap. i. 1, 3, 4, 14 : *In the beginning was the word ; all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was*

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light, and the light was the life of men ; and the word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory. Thus with universal suffrage, all worlds, and all creatures in heaven, earth, and hell, may say of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the manifested Jehovah, *Our Father* ; creation being nothing but the manifestation of the manifested Jehovah. That the angels of heaven glorify him as their creator, we may learn from the 4th of the Revelations, the last verse, where the four and twenty elders are represented as worshipping him that sat on the throne (whom no christian will hesitate to pronounce to be the Lord, the Saviour Jesus Christ), saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.*

In the second place, men and angels may further enter into the subject, and say, *Our Father*, in addressing the Lord as their redeemer. That Jehovah himself was manifested in flesh, to become the Saviour, certainly there can be no doubt, whilst we reflect upon such prophetic declarations as these ; Isa. lxiii. 16, *Thou Jehovah art our Father, our Redeemer ; thy name is from everlasting.* Isa. xlv. 21,
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There is not any God besides me, a just God and a Saviour ; there is none besides me ; and also when we are further informed by the apostle, that it was God that was manifested in flesh, and the second Adam was the Lord from heaven. Hence when we say, that it was Jehovah himself that assumed the human, we mean thereby, that the Father, the essential divine, which can be but one and indivisible, came forth into the ultimates of his own creation, whereby he united the creature to himself, which originally was from himself, and thereby brought his divine glory into full manifestation ; in performing of which, the human Jehovah assumed, was three and thirty years, and endured a life of humiliation in this lower world of our's, putting off all the impurities, which cleaved thereto, in consequence of the fall ; and at the same time subjugated the hells, from whence those evils were excited ; for indeed one was a necessary consequence of the other ; and when he had fully thus glorified the human, and fully subjugated hell, which finally took place by the passion of the cross, he said, It is finished ; he bowed his head and gave up the ghost, as to material life, in order to rise to the life of his own divine, which was his life and

soul, even from conception, and was never after seen by material eyes. Thus he became the redeemer to men and angels, and they may say now, with the greatest propriety, under the idea of his redeeming love, *Our Father* ; and herein all men in the universe may join, because all equally participate of the benefit, which is, in causing the evil spirits to be removed, which cast a cloud and thick darkness over the faculties of man's liberty and rationality ; whereby his free will, that principle upon which he stands, equally at liberty to choose good or evil ; and his reasoning power, that principle in him, whereby he can understand truth from false, were restored. It is the removal of these spirits, in the spiritual world, into which every man enters after death, preventing hereafter their obstructing and perverting influence to man's liberty and rationality, which, as it affects men and angels, is called redemption ; and as it respects the removal of those evil spirits themselves, at the end of a dispensation, casting them down by a forcible influx into their respective hells, is called, in the word, the judgment ; and the last time there was such a removal, in which consisted the Lord's second advent, and which,

which, according to the book of the Revelation, took place before the descent of the New Jerusalem, is termed the last judgment, each and every one being performed by an incarnate Jehovah alone, who will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images of our own devising.

But in the third place, the church above and below may also address Jehovah Jesus, the divine human, God of heaven and earth, as *Our Father*; because he, in an especial manner, is their regenerator, their illuminator, their all and in all; he being the only fountain of life and light whatever, being all derived solely from him: the holy spirit, the internal illuminator; and the word of truth, the external illuminator, which are continually operating for our redemption, being nothing but the divine, proceeding from his glorified body, in which the fulness of the deity is contained, for he tells us peremptorily, in John, chap. xv. 5, *Without me ye can do nothing.*

That the spirit, which regenerates man, is nothing but the divine, proceeding from the glorified human, the person of God and man united, will be evident, from it's being said, before the union fully took place

place between the divine and the human, in John, chap. vii. 39, *That the Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified*; and also from his saying, in John, chap. xvi. 7, *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you*. By his going away, he meant the ascending of the human to the divine, from whence he came, to become inseparably one therewith; therefore he immediately adds, *If I go away, I will send him (the Comforter) unto you*; and when he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me; and ver. 14, *When the spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth*.

We may now come to this solid conclusion, that the *Our Father*, to whom we are directed to address our supplications, is the Lord the Saviour Jesus Christ; he alone, with any propriety, being to be called our Father. It becometh us to make an especial distinction in our ideas, between our Father, as creatures, and the Father of the human in the Lord; the human of the Lord being the only-begotten Son of the Father, because THE ONLY that proceeded from the essential divine, and from whence it proceeded in first principles from all eternity, although it was
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not in the last, till manifested in time. It is in allusion to the divine human, being with the essential divine in first principles from all eternity, which afterwards was manifested in it's fulness in time, that our Lord thus addresses the Father, whilst going through his process of glorification, John, chap. xvii. 5, *Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* There was a Father and a Son from all eternity, but not separate as to persons; the Father was the soul of the deity, and the Son the body; but until the incarnation, this body was only in it's first principles, when it came forth in all it's fulness, applicable to our fallen estate. When man was no longer able to ascend to God, God descends to man; such is the unalterable love of his heart, to make all his creatures happy.

Hence we may see the reason why the human addressed the divine, as his Father; and that a distinction is to be taken between his Father and our Father. For whilst we consider the essential divine as the Father of the divine human, because it is the proceeding manifestation and covering of the essential divine, whom no mortal has seen at any time, and whom
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the Son has manifested, so we have to eye the divine human alone as our Father, for all creatures which exist and subsist, exist and subsist therefrom; for although in respect to the essential divine, the divine human is the beginning of the creation of God, being the first manifestation of deity; yet in respect to men and angels, and all things in the universe, the divine human is properly and truly the creator of all. The divine essential glory of the essential Father is too bright, too pure, to enter into any creature, unless tempered according to the state of the recipient vessel. Therefore, as from the essential divine nothing exists but the divine human; so from the divine human, in whom is the essential divine, exist all things that are. Therefore it is proper, when we address our object of worship in this prayer, or according thereto, that our eye be fixed on the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the visible God of heaven and earth, in whom dwells the invisible as a soul in a body; for by thus approaching the Son, according to our Lord's own declaration, we approach the Father also. Such a prayer will be efficacious for the purposes we ask, so far as our will is swallowed up in the divine will: whilst, if prayer is directed
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to an unknown object, or to an indeterminate one, it scatters with our sight, and consequently never reaches heaven, where they all in one voice acknowledge the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be their God and their Father alone; who also, at seasonable opportunities, are favoured with a beautiful sight of the glory of the divine human, (for the glories of the essential divine can never be seen by any creature) whereby they are fully confirmed, that they are in the Lord's mystical body, in which consists all their heaven and happiness; which brings me to speak a few words to the

Third and last thing to notice in our text, namely, that this Our Father is in the heavens; and I read it so, because that is the most literal translation from the Greek. The reason of it's being said, heavens, in the plural number, appears from our Lord's own declaration, which he made to his disciples, John, chap. xiv. 1. *In my Father's house are MANY MAN- SIONS*; and also from Paul, who tells us expressly, that he was caught up to the third heaven.

The heavens has reference to the divine proceeding, as flowing from our Father, constituting all the heavens; and when we consider himself, in a form

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truly human, and that whatever proceeds from himself, has a tendency to produce that form ; when we consider, that the angels, as to themselves, are nothing either good or true, that they momentarily receive all their supplies of life, love, and wisdom; from the Lord alone, the God-man their Father ; how plain, with a spiritual eye, to behold a heavenly lustre in the expression, OUR FATHER IN THE HEAVENS ; because it is alone by possessing a capacity for receiving life from him as their Father, that the angels abide in him, and he in them ; and whereby they make up a part of his body.

The human mind has also it's heavens, and this according to the form of it's constitution by creation, every man individually being but a pattern of the whole, and the whole of man. The heavens in every man, is the internal part, wherein the Lord flows in with life divine, to support him in liberty and rationality ; which heavens come forth into their full manifestation, with all their blissful peace, if the man follows conscientiously the good and the true, which the Lord, by his continual presence in the heavens, is inspiring him with ; without which, he cannot be capacitated to enter finally into the heavens above.

above. Hence, when we say, Our Father in the heavens, it is an acknowledgment that his divine proceeding constitutes the heavens above ; that all blessednesses flow from him ; that he is both the heat of love, and the light of wisdom. It also implies a full acknowledgment, that the Lord has the inmost seat in our souls ; that he is ever present with us ; that his omniscient eye pervades all our frame, from the inmost delights to the very ultimates of our actions ; that his design in creating us is, that he may have an habitation in our breast, and that we may thus enjoy the particular heaven flowing from himself, which he has provided for all that love him and obey his commandments.

Now to our Lord Jesus Christ be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

N. B. The Author intends (by divine permission) to publish Discourses in Series, on all the various passages of the Lord's Prayer, making eight or nine Sermons in the whole.

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